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BACKGROUND

- The first peasant revolt in Indochina took place in 1927. It was ruthlessly repressed; but the French Imperialists did not succeed in crushing the spirit of the struggle. On the contrary, it became broader and stronger. On 30 June 1930 the Indochinese Communist Party was founded as a result of the merger of several regional Communist parties, some of which had been inspired by the Third International. The Indochinese Communist Party affiliated itself with, and submitted itself to the orders of, the Third International. The negotiations of 1930/31 did not lead to very encouraging results from the point of view of Indochinese independence. However, from the point of view of the Indochinese Communist Party itself, the 1930's were a period of hope and expansion. During this decade, more than 100 promising young Vietnamese found it possible to leave Indochina and, by various routes, usually either via France or China, arrived in the USSR, where they took courses of varying length and importance. The greater proportion of these persons attended classes at the Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow. At this University it was generally recognized that the Annamese converts to Communism were about the most intelligent and as a result of any nationality. A number of them attained the degree of "Agrégés Russes", the highest degree which that school of Communism accorded. At the same time, a number of them established themselves on terms of intimate friendship with French students of the European section of the Communist University in Moscow; for example, the friendship between Ho Chi Minh and other Indochinese students with Thorez and other French Communist leaders of the future as well as with the future Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia. In Indochina itself, after another desperate struggle from 1936 to 1939, the Communists failed to make any important gains,

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except for the consolidation of the Party and the acquisition of new recruits. This was achieved despite the fact that a large number of the leaders and Party members were thrown into prison. The last and most violent insurrection before the Japanese occupation was that of Cochinchina in 1940; but it also was ruthlessly repressed, with much bloodshed. As a result of this repression, two important leaders met their death: MINH Kai, sister-in-law of VO Nguyen Giap, and NGUYEN Hong Phong. These two had been the Indochinese delegates to the 1938 World Congress of the Third International in Moscow. A large number of Party members in Indochina were thrown into prison: The penal colony of Poulo Condor (Con-Lon, Cochinchina), where NGUYEN van Tac, DAO duy Ky, NGUYEN an Ninh and many others were confined; the prisons of Lao Bao (106-40, 16-35), Khatum (108-01, 14-20), Ban re Thuot (108-05, 12-40) in Annam; the prisons of Song-La (103-54, 21-20) and Nghia-Lo (104-31, 21-35) in Tonkin (TRAN duy Lien was confined at Nghia-Lo); and the Central Prisons in Hanoi, Hue, Saigon and Vinh.

2. With the outbreak of the war in Europe in 1939, Germany's attack on the USSR in 1941 and the complete change in the policy of the Communist parties in all the countries of the world, the Indochinese Communist Party, like the rest, had to adopt new tactics. It was to the interest of the USSR to conceal her relations with the Communist parties of various countries, in order to avoid giving offense to the Allies who were helping the USSR in the war. In accord with the general policy of the Third International, the Indochinese Communist Party had to disguise itself and retire into secrecy. Beginning in 1940 Communism had to give way to Nationalism in Indochina. The history of Vietnam entered a new phase with this important turning which was taken by the Indochinese Communist Party: it was a turning of great consequence.

DEVELOPMENT AND INSTRUMENTS OF VIET MINH CONTROL

3. Beginning in 1940 and reaching a climax at the end of 1941 and the beginning of 1942, there were Nationalist revolts such as those at Pac Son (106-02, 21-52) and at Dinh Ca (106-04, 21-44). Guerrilla armies were formed. The Vietnam Liberation Army (Viet Nam Giai-Phong-Qian) was founded. The Resistance Movement against both the French and Japanese became established. And as the counter-measures and oppression by both the French and Japanese grew progressively more brutal and unbearable, the people became more and more ready to join revolutionary organizations. Taking advantage of this state of affairs, the Communist Party embarked on the following tactics:
 - (1) Creation of new revolutionary parties, such as (a) The Democratic Party (Dan Chu Dang); this party was in fact organized by a Communist, NGUYEN dinh Thi who later--under the present Viet Minh Government--became President of the Cultural Association for National Welfare. In organizing the "Democratic" Party he was assisted by DUONG duc Hien, a former President of the Students Association, by VU dinh Hoc, at present Minister of Justice in the Vietnam Government, and by DO duc Duc, who became the Secretary-General of the Democratic Party. (b) The Vietnam Revolutionary Youth Party (Viet Nam Thanh Nien Cach Menh Dong Chi Hoi), created at Liuchow (Kwangsi, China) by HO chi Minh (possibly under a pseudonym), who retired as its leader shortly after its creation. (c) The New Vietnam Party (Tan Viet Cach Menh Dang) which was also created by HO chi Minh, but under a different one of his numerous aliases; this time, LY Thuy.
 - (2) Strengthening and encouragement of the Indochinese Communist Party itself, but now in a more subtle and secret form.
 - (3) Creation of National Welfare Associations (Doan The Cuu Quoc). Examples of these are: National Welfare Associations of Youth, of Women, of Parents, of Workers; and especially of the "Tu-Ve" (Tu Ve Cuu Quoc)--"Self-Defense" associations.
 - (4) Formation of a political front: The Viet Minh. This Front, in appearance, was the result of the merger of all the National Welfare Associations and of several political parties of which the most important was the Indo-Chinese Communist Party and the second most important--but far less so--the Democratic Party.
4. During the Japanese Occupation, the organization of the Viet Minh was as follows:
 - (1) On the lowest level there were the Tieu-To ("little nests"), which in fact were cells consisting of 8 to 10 persons each. Each Tieu To chose a delegate. These delegates formed a committee on the next higher level. Thus, step by step by the same process on ascending levels, the following came into existence:

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- (2) Khu-Bo--Committee for a Khu (district) in the country, or Thanh-Bo--Committee for a town;
- (3) Tinh-Bo--Committee for a province;
- (4) Xu-Bo--Committee for a Xu (large regional division); and finally,
- (5) Tong-Bo--General Directing Committee.

The role of the Tieu-To was that of a cell which multiplied and recruited new party members. The Thanh-Bo (Town Committees) and Tinh-Bo (Provincial Committees) organized People's Committees which were at that time called "National Liberation Committees." These People's Committees, during the Japanese Occupation, had a character which was at once administrative, political and military. The Tong-Bo (General Directing Committee) during the Japanese Occupation elected an Executive Committee which was named the "Vietnam Liberation Committee", with HO CHI MINH as President. After the uprising of August 1945, it was this Committee, with the addition of a few members who were neutral and in particular harmless, which became the Provisional Government. The Tieu-To, no longer having any particular function to fulfill, disappeared, and the People's Committees became the provisional organs of administration. However, they soon tended to become Electoral Colleges only, leaving all active administration to the "Executive Committees" of the People's Committees.

5. In August 1945 the Viet Minh seized the power in the name of the People and formed a Nationalist Government. This Government was a Provisional Government and was recognized as such. It was the Viet Minh which dominated both the Government and the People's Committees; and, more particularly, it was the Communist Party which dominated the Viet Minh. (See paragraphs 23-40 for History of Viet Minh Basic Policy from 1945 to 1947).

6. But the Communists wanted to make known to the people of Vietnam and the world at large that Vietnam was a "Democracy" and that the Vietnam Government was a "Democratic" Government which represented all parties of the people and included non-partisans also. Consequently, in February 1946, general elections were held. From the Viet Minh point of view the following is the story:

"Long lists of candidates were presented and elaborate machinery set up to make certain that the true wishes of the people should be expressed. But since it was the first general election ever held in Vietnam, the voters naturally needed guidance from somebody, and it was necessary for the Provisional Government (Viet Minh) to provide this guidance. This they did by means of an adequate "Information" Service, which gave the people the necessary details concerning who were the truly patriotic candidates. The result was that the people voted overwhelmingly for a Coalition Government--which included representatives of all parties and a number of non-partisans. Thus it was impossible to accuse the Vietnam Government of March 1946 of being dominated by a single party, since it was elected by universal suffrage of all the people and contained only a minority of Viet Minh members. And this minority certainly had a right to be in the government, since it was a party which represented a certain percentage of the population and also had the glory of having led the struggle for the country's independence. Similarly, it was impossible to accuse the Communist Party of dominating the Viet Minh. Namach u, in November 1945 the Communist Party voluntarily dissolved itself as the 'ood of the Republic."

On the highest level (the Government), therefore, this was a Communist-dominated state in appearance. On the lower levels it was now, at least in appearance, the People's Committees that were in charge of local administration.

7. The nature of the administration of Indochina as it evolved under the Provisional Government (September 1945-February 1946), the Coalition Government (Spring 1946) and finally the present Vietnam Government is as follows: On the highest level, there is the Vietnam Government itself, which is, as the Viet Minh point out, composed (even now) of ministers of various parties and some non-partisan ministers. The Viet Minh fail to point out that all the most important posts are occupied by

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Viet Minh members. The Government gives directives and orders to the Executive Committees on each level: Bo (the three large divisions of Tonkin, Annam, Cochinchina); Province (Tinh); District (Huyen); and Village (Xa). The Executive Committees of the Xa and Tinh are chosen by the People's Committees of those divisions, with the approval of the Executive Committees on higher levels. The People's Committees are elected by the people by direct universal suffrage. The Executive Committee of the Bo is chosen by all the Executive Committees of the Tinh in that Bo; and the Executive Committee of the Huyen is chosen by all the Executive Committees in the Xa of that Huyen. Thus there is at least an appearance of democratic methods of choosing the local administration. But the Viet Minh intimate that:

"It must be recognized that Vietnam has enjoyed the benefits and fulfilled the duties of 'Democracy' for only a very short time. 'Democracy' represents the most reasonable political trend for the world in general; and must therefore be preserved in Vietnam at all costs. Vietnam must certainly not retrace its steps and turn to slavery and feudalism. Therefore it is entirely logical to fear that the People's Committees might misunderstand the orders of the Government and might run the risk of reverting to the impotent position of the former 'Conseils des Notables' which were mere puppets of the French. In order to counteract an evil which is more than a possibility, and to avert this danger, it is logical to provide these People's Committees (or their Executive Committees) with Advisors."

This has been done with great energy and efficiency. At present such advisors are very numerous and are encountered in various forms (Paragraphs 8-11).

State Can-Bo

The State Can-Bo (Can Bo The Nuoc). This term may be defined as "Men provided by the State." (See note regarding terminology at end of report). During the Japanese Occupation the Can-Bo were agents who had already received adequate training--most often they were young revolutionaries. In the regions controlled by the Viet Minh guerrillas there were about 30 Can-Bo schools. The course lasted from 15 to 30 days. Each school comprised about 30 students, who were being prepared to become at the same time political leaders and guerrilla chiefs. Some training was given in political doctrine and organization, but principal emphasis was of course on military matters--weapons, demolitions, sabotage, espionage. The courses were conducted by Can-Bo, the students themselves becoming potential Can-Bo upon the completion of their course. The importance attached by the Viet Minh to these schools is evidenced by the fact that they were organized by Ho Chi Minh himself and his immediate entourage of senior political leaders. Similarly inspired schools were held even in the regions definitely controlled by the Japanese. These schools were of course conducted in great secrecy, and moved about frequently from place to place. The number of students in each was usually not more than 10 at any one time. In this latter type of school the principal emphasis was on education for clandestine political organization and propaganda to create the greatest possible number of Tieu-To, and to give new recruits elementary lessons in weapons in order to enable them to defend themselves and to organize the "Tu-Ve" Self Defense Units, and to assassinate Japanese and pro-Japanese traitors when necessary. After the Japanese Surrender most of the country came quickly under the domination of the Viet Minh; consequently the demand for Can-Bo greatly exceeded the supply and it was necessary to train new ones hastily. Can-Bo schools sprang up in plenty. During the periods of the Provisional Government and of the Coalition Government, military operations were less important; therefore, although military discipline continued to be observed in the schools, less than half of the courses were military; the remainder were on political subjects and the technique of propaganda--particularly propaganda in favor of the Viet Minh Party and the Viet Minh Government. At the same time however, there were some Can-Bo who received more detailed military instruction; these were men who were destined to take charge of the organization of Local Militias (Tu-Ve) which were to replace the police and fulfill the same functions. By this time, the Tu-Ve--originally National Welfare Associations for Self-Defense--had ceased to be National Welfare Associations and had become a more specialized kind of organization (See paragraph 11). While its

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primary function was that of a Militia and Police Force, its intimate knowledge of local conditions and personalities even within a minute quarter of a city (the Tu-Ve were organized by streets and blocks within a city) result in its intelligence services being called upon by various sorts of political and police organizations (see below). Gradually also, as National Welfare Associations for all classes and categories sprang up in almost every region, the Viet Minh deemed it necessary to provide them with Specialist Technical Advisors (Can-Po Ky Thuat Chuyen Mo), such as the Can-Po assigned to advise the local National Welfare Associations of Peasants, of Farmers, of Workers, etc. The State Can-Po as they gradually developed in the Provisional and Coalition Government periods into the full flowering of the present period may be divided roughly into several categories:

- (1) Can-Po for administrative services--to help the Executive Committees of the People's Committees.
- (2) Military Can-Po for the organization of Local Militias. 25X1
- (3) Can-Po for the Cultural Associations and for Propaganda, excluding the teachers used in the program of mass education in reading and writing.
- (4) Can-Po to act as Specialist Technical Advisors--for Agriculture, Handicrafts, Highway Commissions, etc. This category is given only enough political indoctrination to make sure that they will not run counter to government directives.
- (5) Can-Po to act as unofficial representatives and observers in neighboring countries.

9. State Can-Po are usually chosen from among the population of the locality to which they are destined to be assigned in order to be on more friendly and intimate terms with the people with whom they have to deal. The State Can-Po provide superficial instruction in Viet Minh organization and doctrine. In the instruction on doctrine, a certain amount of Marxist phraseology is used; but the theory enunciated is chiefly "anti-Fascist"; much emphasis is placed on the dominant role of the "majority." This is because the Viet Minh do not wish the true Communist character of the state to be too widely known among the State Can-Po. During the course of instruction on doctrine, discussion groups are frequently held, which enables the instructors to fulfill another important (secret) role: that of spies for the Government, for the purpose of checking on the loyalty, opinions and activities of local officials. The State Can-Po are given titles indicating the function which they fulfill: for example, Mr. X is a Propaganda Can-Po; Mr. Y is a Youth Can-Po, Mr. Z is an Agriculture Can-Po. These Can-Po receive their training in schools controlled by the respective Ministries; for example, Administrative Can-Po in schools controlled by the Ministry of the Interior. These schools are more or less overt; that is, their existence as well as the identity of the pupils is known. The courses are confidential, and strangers are not permitted to attend. These Can-Po are theoretically under the orders of the Ministry which appoints them, and their power is confined to the function and area specifically assigned to them. As soon as one of them is assigned to a certain locality, he proceeds to that locality and remains there with the People's Committee or a Public Welfare Association of that locality. They fill the role of advisors to these Committees or these Associations and submit their reports to their respective Ministries. But in reality these reports are submitted through another Committee, known as the "Viet Minh Committee."

The Viet Minh Committees

10. The Viet Minh Committees (Uy-Ban Viet Minh). Although the uprising of August 1945 resulted in the seizure of power by the Vietnamese, the Viet Minh still continued to find reasons for not abandoning its role, claiming that:
 - "(1) The Viet Minh is a political Front which led the Vietnamese people to freedom; (2) The Viet Minh is a Front which represents a part of the masses; and (3) The Viet Minh claims the privilege of being the Front which represents the most revolutionary and most democratic parties; therefore, it is the duty of continuing to guide the people along the path of 'democracy', and preventing the People's Committees from degenerating into Reaction. These People's Committees, of course, are Committees elected by the people, but are naturally subject to human error which would run the risk of injuring rather than serving the people."

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The functions of the Viet Minh Committees, which consist of personnel who are State Can-Bo, are as follows:

(1) To act as advisors to the People's Committees and the Executive Committees of the People's Committees. The Viet Minh intimate that "since it is the duty of the Viet Minh Committees to act as advisors to the People's Committees, it is entirely logical that the Viet Minh Committees should control the activities of the State Can-Bo, who are at the same time themselves advisors to the People's Committees and (nearly all) members of the Viet Minh Party. These Can-Bo must be advised how to obey both the State and the Party".

(2) To continue to act as "Enlighteners" of the People, inasmuch as the Viet Minh is a "revolutionary and a democratic" party. In order properly to fulfill this second function, it is necessary for the Viet Minh Committees to extend the circle of their activities and to recruit new Party members to consolidate the Party's position in the ranks of the people. The simplest method for the Viet Minh to accomplish this purpose is:

(a) To spread propaganda on behalf of the Party and of the Government at the same time; this propaganda is made up by the Propaganda Can-Bo and the Cultural Associations;

(b) To extend the activity of the National Welfare Associations and to arouse everybody to become a member of one or more of these Associations. Farmers are put under pressure to join Farmer's Associations, women to join Women's Associations, bankers to join Banker's Associations. Pressure to join these Associations rests on the thesis that they are Associations for Public Welfare (the Annamese name has almost the significance of 'National Salvation'), and that it is the duty of everyone to be patriotic and to work for the salvation of his fatherland and nation. Thus, without belonging to any political party at all, it is sufficient for a person to join any one of these Associations to find himself in the Viet Minh. This leaves no opportunity to the individual to join any other party than the Viet Minh. This situation has been completely fulfilled in nearly all the provinces, but to a slightly lesser extent in the cities. But in the cities as well as the provinces there is always a remedy in case the population is reluctant to join the Associations. This remedy is called the Cong-An

Cong-An

(c) The Cong-An (Public Safety or Surety). The Viet Minh point out that "the People's Committees take care of administration in the various localities and, with the aid of Can-Bo and of Viet Minh Committees, are charged with the duty of improving conditions in that locality and of advancing the work of reconstruction in order to make the people happy. This, therefore, is a constructive and positive task. The Cong-An, on the other hand, is charged with a destructive duty--not, of course, destructive of the programs of reconstruction and happiness, but destructive of the elements and factors which are themselves destructive of that progress--or, a negative duty so to speak--that of suppressing the elements and factors which deny the positive value of that positive work."

The agents of the Cong-An are called Trinh-Sat (Trinh means to explore or to conquer; but also means virgin or unprejudiced; Sat means to observe.) The Trinh-Sat of the Cong-An must not be confused with the Civil Police which are known as Tho-An for the provinces and Canh-Sat for the cities. Nor should it be confused with the Tu-Ve or Militia. Most of the Trinh-Sat are ardent young men with zealous and alert minds. Some of them are graduates of Can-Bo schools. Others are veteran members of the Viet Minh Party from the days of the Japanese Occupation. There are two kinds of Trinh-Sat for the Cong-An: (1) Trinh-Sat Chinh-tri (Political Trinh-Sat). They are charged with political affairs and have the duty of watching suspicious characters and malcontents--in a word those who belong or might belong to a party other than the Viet Minh and who might plot against the Government. (2) Trinh-Sat Kinh-te (Economic Trinh-Sat). They are charged with economic affairs and have the duty of investigating smuggling, gambling, thefts, crimes and all underworld activity. The Trinh-Sat have a great deal of power. As soon as they show their credentials to the local authorities, they are given all possible assistance. Although the Government of Vietnam has declared that "Vietnam is a democratic country and therefore has no Secret Police", it must be admitted that the activities of the Trinh-Sat are always secret.

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Tu-Ve

11. The Tu-Ve, although they are not directly charged with the duty of preventing the people from departing from the path of "democracy", are exceedingly useful, because of their intimate knowledge of local conditions and personalities, in assisting those who are more directly charged with this duty. (See paragraph 8)

Aspects of Control

12. The present administration of Vietnam has a more popular base than that which existed under the French regime because of the participation of a greater number of strata of the people. The Viet Minh dominates this administration. The Viet Minh itself has become a very broad Front because of the extensive participation of the different strata of society. According to the Viet Minh themselves, the Viet Minh Front is the result of the "fusion of several political parties and of different National Welfare Associations." The General Directing Committee of the Front (Tong Bo Viet Minh) is composed of delegates from those political parties and those Associations. The Directing Committee gives orders and directives to the Regional Committees of the Viet Minh, to the local National Welfare Associations, to the Can-Bo and to the Trinh-Sat of the Cong-An. Naturally these orders are coordinated with the various Ministries of the Government. Without the Viet Minh Committees, the Public Welfare Associations, the State Can-Bo and the Trinh-Sat of the Cong-An the Viet Minh would lose control of the people, control of the administration and control of power.
13. The most important party of the Viet Minh was the Indochinese Communist Party, and naturally its delegates became members of the Viet Minh Tong-Bo. But as the Viet Minh assumed the mission of serving the Nation, it has to serve also the (democratic) government of that Nation--the highest organ representative of the Vietnamese Republic. Because of this mission, and in a desire to avoid permitting either the Government or the Nation from appearing too Communist in the eyes of the world, the Indochinese Communist Party voluntarily dissolved in November 1945.

The Association For Marxist Studies

14. Immediately after the dissolution, this Party was replaced by the Association for Marxist Studies. In appearance this Association is composed of persons who wish to study the philosophical theory of Marxism, "without the least intention of applying it in practice." It publishes books and a newspaper which exhibit a Communist tendency; for example, its organ Su-That ("Truth" - cf. Pravda) is plainly Communist in tone; and it enjoys more privilege than the non-Communist Quu Bao, organ of the Tong-Bo itself. The Government, claiming to be a "Democratic" one, intimates that "it is entirely natural that there should be freedom of thought and of the press and that such publications should be permitted." The Viet Minh also intimates that, because the Association is a private one, it is "quite natural that the public should know of only one representative of this Association, namely Mr. PHAM van Khoa, and that the names of the other members should not appear publicly."

Tong-Bo (Viet Minh Directing Committee)

15. But what is not at all natural is that even after the dissolution of the Indochinese Communist Party its former members continued to remain members of the Viet Minh Tong-Bo. For example, the official spokesman of the Viet Minh Tong-Bo is still NGUYEN Luong Bang, formerly well known as a member of the Communist Party, better known by the nickname of Sao-Lo ("Red Star"), and affectionately known as Anh-Ca ("Elder Brother") to all Can-Bo, of whom he is the official chief. Furthermore, the Tong-Bo is always surrounded by an atmosphere of the greatest mystery; public opinion has for the Tong-Bo (rather than for the Government) a feeling of respect which combines veneration, fear and excessive consideration. Although the Tong-Bo is officially composed of about 60 delegates, the true Tong-Bo (a sort of committee within a committee) is composed of about 10 members who are sufficiently

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mysterious to be little known and who are certainly neither members of the Democratic Party nor delegates from any of the National Welfare Associations. They must therefore belong to the Communist Party.

16. It is quite well known that the Tong-Bo gives orders and directives to the Regional Committees of the Viet Minh, which, with their Associations, their State Can-Bo who are members of the Viet Minh, and their Trinh-Sat of the Cong-An, control the People's Committees which are charged with local administration. But it is far less well known that the Tong-Bo, the highest organ of the Viet Minh, is constantly apprehensive that the People's Committees and--even more important--the Regional Committees of the Viet Minh, may stray "unintentionally" from the desired path. For this reason they have decided to place Can-Bo Viet Minh or Can-Bo Cuu Quoc (Viet Minh Can-Bo or National Welfare Can-Bo) in each region.

Viet Minh Can-Bo or National Welfare Can-Bo

17. The Viet Minh Can-Bo must not be confused with the State Can-Bo, who report to their respective Ministries and whose authority is strictly limited to their assigned duties within their assigned areas. Although the same Annamese word, Can-Bo, is used to designate these two different categories of men, the word Can-Bo as applied to the Viet Minh Can-Bo has no English equivalent; its French translation is "cadre". The Viet Minh Can-Bo is a person who can make decisions on all military, political and economic affairs in the region to which he is appointed. The following is an example to illustrate the function and authority of the Viet Minh Can-Bo:

Chem-Ve is a suburban district of Hanoi, extending for a distance of nearly 20 kilometers along the right bank of the Red River. In this district at the end of 1945 and the beginning of 1946 there were 6 Viet Minh Can-Bo, of whom one, by the name of CHU, was the most important. He was directly responsible to the Tong-Bo of the Viet Minh, not to the Government. The proof of this fact was that when, for personal reasons, he had arrested 22 young girls on a trumped-up charge of Trotskyism without consulting or receiving the approval of the local People's Committee, he refused to yield to the demands of HOANG Minh Giam, Minister of the Interior, that they should be released.

18. The Viet Minh Can-Bo not only does not take orders from the People's Committee but himself gives orders to it. He has the power to control commerce, transportation and communication. He can command the local militia (Tu-Ve), the local office of the Surete (Cong-An) and the local units of the Army in itself. For example, in January 1946 the same CHU mentioned above used 200 soldiers to kill all the 70 members of a local unit of the Chinese occupational forces, take possession of their arms and throw the bodies into the Red River. This time, however, CHU went too far. The result was that the Vietnam Government paid an indemnity to the Chinese, and CHU was executed as well as the local military commander who had obeyed his orders.
19. It is clear that the Viet Minh Can-Bo is a very powerful figure, and a chief whose "enlightened" views command great respect. He is responsible only to the body of ten men which constitute the true inner circle of the Tong-Bo of the Viet Minh. In choosing the Viet Minh Can-Bo, therefore, the Tong-Bo takes care to confine itself to men whom they can trust absolutely, in order to run the least possible risk of bungling the orders of the Tong-Bo and to make sure of carrying out its policy without deviation. Since the true Tong-Bo (inner circle) consists exclusively of members of the Communist Party of the Third International, it may be logically deduced that the Viet Minh Can-Bo can hardly avoid being members of the Communist Party.

Party Schools

20. The schools, in which are trained the guiding spirits of the Viet Minh and their potential successors, exhibit even more striking peculiarities than those in which

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the State Can-Do are trained. The very existence of these schools is a closely-guarded secret. At these schools the training is highly specialized and is pure Communism. The importance with which these schools are regarded by the high command is indicated by the fact that HO chi Minh himself sometimes gives lectures in them. In these lectures he addresses the students as "Comrade" and they are invited to address him similarly. Occasional lectures are also given by VO nguyen Giap, PHAM van Dong, TRAN van Giau and other leading Communists. The regular lectures, or course, are given by instructors of less importance, whose time is not fully occupied with other duties. Courses include the following: (1) Definitions--liberty, democracy, communism, etc. (2) History of the Communist Party. (3) Mass psychology--how to lead the masses by flattery or control them by fear, etc. (4) How to organize peasant and workers' movements. (5) How to sabotage Trotskyists and the Nationalist Front. (6) How to organize hunger strikes in prisons and other strikes in French-controlled territory. (7) How to terrorize the population in French-controlled territory.

21. Technically, the lectures are of high quality. The theories expressed are clear and coherent and a wealth of concrete examples is given. Special lecturers are invited to recount personal experiences to illustrate theories, such as that of hunger strikes in French prisons. Many of the textbooks used are secret. Like the lectures, they are clear and concrete. Some are translations or adaptations from the Russian. Examples of these include: extracts from the works of Lenin and Stalin, Manifesto of the Communist Party at the Third International (1936/37), new Stalinist theories which developed after the expulsion of the Trotskyists, the "Death-Struggle of Capitalism". The purpose of these textbooks is to apply the Soviet doctrine specifically to Indochinese problems. Other textbooks are written by Vietnamese--always under a pseudonym.

Appearance versus Reality

22. It may therefore be concluded that the administration of Vietnam, with its Government and its People's Committees, has a democratic appearance; it is under the control of the Viet Minh; the Viet Minh Front, in turn, is under the control of the Indochinese Communist Party, despite the fact that the Party was dissolved in 1945.

HISTORY OF VIET MINH BASIC POLICY---1945-1947

23. Owing to a flexible policy, the Indochinese Communist Party, through the Viet Minh--after the latter had become a broad Front with the participation of broad strata of the people--imposed its political control over Vietnam: it overcame, without too much difficulty, the so-called Nationalist Parties (Q.D.D., Dong Minh Hoi, etc.) and put up a determined resistance first against the demands of the Chinese Occupation troops and later against the French.
24. The following factors and conditions were favorable to a general insurrection of the Viet Minh at the time when it actually took place, in the summer of 1945:
- Internal conditions in Vietnam: (1) War, poverty, famine, drought. (2) Ruthless oppression by both French and Japanese. (3) Conscious awakening by an oppressed people; indifference toward death, which often seemed preferable to the unbearable conditions of life; consequent readiness to join Revolutionary organizations. (4) Emergence of the Viet Minh Front with, or of, the Indochinese Communist Party, at the most favorable moment; flexibility of its strategy, which shifted emphasis away from Communism to Nationalism.
- External conditions: (1) World War between Axis and Allies--propaganda of liberation and of future freedom to be accorded to those who participated on the side of the Allies; consciousness of their own strength on the part of the people in general and of the people of small countries in particular. (2) Conflict between Japanese and French imperialism; these two oppressive forces were destroying each other and making room for a third force--that of revolution.

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25. In general it was these conditions which favored riots, revolts and, above all, organized revolution. All classes in Vietnam were profoundly affected. The proletariat were the most exploited of all, the workers being kept in subjection by a law which was more military than civil, and being reduced to beasts of burden rather than human beings. The peasants, under increasingly difficult economic conditions, were deprived of their tiny properties and died of famine and disease. The Petite-Bourgeoisie became dislocated: functionaries were poorly paid, small merchants were no longer able to find goods to sell; small artisans could not find the necessary materials for their handicrafts. The rich Bourgeois were turned out of their properties, houses and factories by the military. There was only one category of the people who were able to profit by this state of affairs: those who served the Japanese, who made profits in the black market, illegal acquisitions of land and forceful confiscations.
26. The Viet Minh, in the face of the general discontent of almost all classes and with the change in strategy of the Indochinese Communist Party, advocated cooperation and the union of all classes in a broad Front. There was to be neither a dictatorship of the proletariat nor a dictatorship of capitalists; no one class was to dominate the others. There was to be only a general Front for independence, and against oppression, Fascism and imperialism. However, since the various classes had interests which were somewhat opposed to one another and it was impossible to evolve a propaganda which would suit them all, the Viet Minh advertised itself as a Front consisting of several different political parties which represented different classes and permitted each party to issue its own propaganda on behalf of the class which it represented. The Communist Party, although claiming to be the defender of the Proletariat, was in reality the party of the Petite-Bourgeoisie. This class was in decomposition but at the same time remained extremely numerous; and even in its decomposition attempted to halt the bifurcation of the two opposing currents--the relatively rich and the poor--and to unite them. This strategy of the Viet Minh in permitting divergent propaganda worked smoothly and functioned excellently as long as there was a concrete purpose: independence and liberty at the expense of a concrete enemy: the Japanese. The classes at both extremes of society were not strong enough to fight for themselves. The Proletariat was insufficiently organized and united; the Trotskyists, for example, had promised the Viet Minh to help them in the coming insurrection, while intending in due course to push this insurrection further and transform it into a proletarian revolution. The capitalists exhibited the same weakness as the Proletariat. If the comparatively wealthy Bourgeoisie allowed itself to be easily led by the Petite-Bourgeoisie, it was because the former was not truly a Revolutionary class in Indochina. All the revolts that had taken place since the French conquest were revolts by representatives of the feudal aristocracy--former Mandarins and scholars, or--later--insurrections of peasants and strikes by workers. The Viet Minh's policy of Union is the explanation of the success of the Viet Minh in defending the vague interests of the Petite-Bourgeoisie. It is also the explanation of the strength of the insurrection of August 1945, immediately after the Japanese surrender.
27. Immediately after the fall of the Japanese - (disappearance of the concrete enemy) - and immediately after the seizure of power by the Viet Minh (apparent attainment of the concrete purpose: Independence, liberty, happiness), that strategy of the collaboration of classes began to totter. At this new turning-point in history, the Viet Minh remained undecided regarding the strategy to adopt. There were additional disadvantages: lack of Cao-Bac, lack of an adequate intelligence service, lack of detailed information because of the general confusion, and lack of materials.
28. Having been swept beyond its intended sphere, the Viet Minh found itself in another vast sphere. In its indecision, it could only continue its policy of compromise, attempting to put through the easiest, most pressing and at the same time least dangerous reforms. The greatest danger of decomposition lay in the two extremes which had become more or less attached to it: the Proletariat on the one hand and the relatively rich on the other. The Viet Minh tried to satisfy

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the Proletariat by promises alone, giving the workers a glimpse of better living conditions for the future, but hastily adding that the most important duty for everyone at present is to make sacrifices before making demands, in order that the newly-won independence might be maintained and firmly established.

29. These promises made by the Viet Minh were not entirely successful; and it continued to be the two extremes (Proletariat and relatively rich Bourgeoisie) which put to the test the Viet Minh's policy of compromise. On the one hand, the Proletariat--particularly the workers--showed plainly their discontent. The war was ended, the country liberated, the nation had its own government--and yet conditions of life were no different from before. The Proletariat remained poor and unhappy. Discontent, indignation and the spirit of revolt took hold of them. Trotskyist nuclei were formed and grew apace. Despite the Viet Minh censorship, clandestine Trotskyist publications were distributed in workers' circles in greater and greater abundance. Secret meetings were held with greater and greater frequency. The conflict threatened to become bitter and violent. In the face of this threat, the Viet Minh employed its two most powerful weapons: propaganda and terror. TA THU THAU, the most important Trotskyist leader was executed; LUONG DUC THIEP and a great number of other Trotskyists were arrested and placed in concentration camps. Temporarily, at the beginning of 1946, the threat from the left appeared to have been averted.
30. On the other hand, even before the leftist threat had been suppressed, two other troublesome elements appeared on the right, brought by the Chinese Occupation Troops: namely the Quoc Dan Dang (QDD) and the Dong Minh Hoi. These parties found adherents among the Bourgeois who were still in doubt whether the Viet Minh would maintain the degree of order necessary for business to prosper as had been promised. The Viet Minh tried to satisfy the relatively rich Bourgeois by promising them that private property would not be touched and that order would be maintained. These Bourgeois were formerly the lackeys of the French and the Japanese. They had been temporarily deprived of the masters who were necessary for them to maintain their control over the masses. They were worried. Now that the Chinese had arrived, they thought they saw the eagerly awaited masters and hoped to use them as a support and to profit by them. The Chinese also wished to exploit and make the greatest possible profits. A number of rich Vietnamese joined the QDD and the Dong Minh Hoi. Their aim was to overthrow the Viet Minh Government. But this attempt was entirely unsuccessful for the following reasons:
 - (1) The Chinese realized that the period of their stay in Indochina would be limited. They therefore encouraged disorder so that they might fish in troubled waters, rather than attempting to establish themselves strongly among the masses and making the latter truly dependent upon them. This error had its origin in the weakness of the Chinese Central Government.
 - (2) The Chinese, having been accustomed to such poverty themselves, exploited even the smallest interests, without leaving a reasonable profit for their Annamese followers. It appeared that the Chinese were too grasping and wanted to seize everything.
 - (3) The Annamese followers of the Chinese, of the QDD and of the Dong Minh Hoi, were incompetent. They lacked a concrete organization and their propaganda was unskillful. The Bourgeois quickly realized that those parties were neither good masters nor good followers. In a word, they were useless as instruments of Bourgeois policy.
31. Although for a certain time both the Trotskyists and the QDD-Dong Minh Hoi appeared to threaten the Viet Minh, the latter's policy of compromise managed to hold and to avoid decisive tests. Trotskyist extremism was suppressed and the Bourgeois opposition allied to the QDD-Dong Minh Hoi gradually died down, leaving a heap of embers which were eventually scattered on Chinese soil and only occasionally flared up again momentarily.
32. Although the Viet Minh overcame these agitations with much clear thinking and timeliness, obstacles continued. The Viet Minh policy, being based on compromise,

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was unable to rid itself of its fundamental inconsistencies. In the face of an immediate attack by the French in Tonkin, the Viet Minh was forced to negotiate the Preliminary Accord of 6 March 1946. Conferences and negotiations for a final treaty dragged on for months and ended with the Fontainebleau Modus Vivendi of 14 September 1946. The situation in France was also full of inconsistencies, and France herself needed to settle these inconsistencies.

33. Outwardly, in the period between September and the renewal of hostilities in December 1946, there did not appear to be serious contradictions in the internal affairs of Vietnam. The HO chi Minh Government rested solidly on the corpses of Trotskyist and QDD opposition. The People's Committees and the Viet Minh organizations--National Welfare Associations, Can-Bo, Trinh-Sat--took deep root among the people, and were able to guide them without too much difficulty in the desired direction. After the signing of the Modus Vivendi there were indeed evidences of discontent and accusations against the Government for having made too many concessions to the French. But the Viet Minh was able to pull over a clever trick. It was not the Vietnamese Delegation which had signed the Modus Vivendi: it was rather HO chi Minh himself. For a long time clever propaganda had created about the personality of HO chi Minh an atmosphere of mystery amounting almost to religious mysticism; it had made him immensely popular; and it had presented him to the public as a leader who was enlightened in all matters, a father of wisdom and a man whose policies were infallible. It was HO chi Minh himself therefore who supported the whole weight of responsibility for this signature, and the Viet Minh remained intact and blameless.
34. The appearance of Viet Minh stability was to be noted especially in public opinion. After the March 1946 agreement, and especially after the September 1946 Modus Vivendi, there were in general two opposing currents of opinion. One was to make small concessions to the French in order to have peace as long as possible and to avoid a disastrous conflict. The other one was very uncompromising: to struggle at all costs against the French and to achieve complete and unquestioned independence rather than to accept a relative liberty which was too much akin to tutelage. But this difference of opinion was not completely irreconcilable, because hardly anyone holding the second opinion dared to say that those holding the first were pro-French traitors. Everyone declared himself to be anti-French, but with different shades of views.

35. But the absence of serious contradictions in Vietnam was apparent only beneath the surface, the situation was beginning to boil. The frame of mind of the Vietnamese people after September 1946 was in fact very complicated.

(1) First there was the class of former Mandarins, former high functionaries and merchants who had grown rich under the French regime. These people were not able at the moment to follow the French; but as the latter pushed forward to a restoration of their power, this class of Annamites saw more clearly the possibility of one day becoming puppet instruments of the French, who would permit them to build or re-build their fortunes.

(2) There was the category of new capitalists, who had grown rich on black markets, in the recent illegal seizure of lands, or in advantageous war contracts.

The class of newly-rich Bourgeois is not identical with the Tan Dan Chu Dang, although the latter contains some elements of this class. The Tan Dan Chu Dang also includes, however, a number of persons who have possessed fortunes for a long time, as well as a number of intellectuals. The Tan Dan Chu Dang is still a relatively small organization and certainly does not include all, or even a majority of the newly-rich Bourgeois described here). These people were immensely rich in comparison with the pre-war period, and had invested their future in the Viet Minh Government. Their interest was entirely contrary to that of the French capitalists, whose former wealth, properties and means of production and exploitation were now in their hands. This category

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was definitely anti-French; compare for example the questions of the Haiphong Customs and Tariffs, the Hongay mines, the mines in the mountainous region of Tonkin, import and export with China and the United States.

(3) As to the Petits-Bourgeois, some were on the side of those who wanted a fight to the finish against the French; others wanted peace at any price. Consequently, their efforts were confused. This class, being in decomposition, but at the same time very numerous, was incapable of imposing a clear policy aimed at a specific interest. Their efforts--confused but never violent--nevertheless demonstrated clearly the uncertainty of the situation and the impossibility of stabilizing this class of society. Although there was no open warfare at this time between France and Vietnam, there was a scarcity of everything. The small merchant lacked products to sell, and his profits were less than his expenses; the small functionary lived like a soldier, working almost without salary; the artisan felt that he was working for someone other than himself.

(4) On the other hand, if the tendencies of the Petits-Bourgeois were very vague, those of the workers were more clear: they had become purely conscripts. Their conditions of life had become even more miserable than before. In contradiction to the promises which the Viet Minh had offered, their rights were further restricted. Strikes were forbidden (except one strike on the part of workers in a printing-shop whose proprietor had agreed to publish anti-Viet Minh tracts for the QDD) and unions prohibited (there was only the National Welfare Association of Workers, which reduced the worker to the position of a conscript). The only concession made by the Ministry of Labor (which was headed by Stalinists--at first LE van Hien, and later NGUYEN van Tao) was the 8-hour day and a holiday on the first of May with pay. These concessions were certainly insufficient. Gradually the workers began to realize that they were being exploited just as much as before, if not more so. In concert with the peasants (another proletarian group which was as much exploited as they, but less conscious of the power of the Proletariat) these workers had supported the Indochinese Communist Party and had contributed largely to its advance along the road to power. Their former comrades claimed to be still their friends--these comrades who were now all-powerful Ministers. Nevertheless, in exchange for a few flatteries, the workers were being asked to work harder and harder for a cause which appeared to them to be too noble to become a reality.

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36. The thorny problems for HO chi Minh, for the Indochinese Communist Party, for the dominant fraction in the Government, after the September 1946 Modus Vivendi, were as follows:

(1) How to maintain guardianship over the category of Bourgeois who might be inclined to ally themselves with the French, and escape from Viet Minh control?
 (2) How to satisfy the category of newly-rich Bourgeois who now had nearly all the means of production in their hands, and who might overthrow the Government when they saw that it was becoming weak?

(3) How to appease the great mass of Petits-Bourgeois who were still accusing the French colonialists for their present woes, but who might one day turn and accuse the Government itself of its inability to save and defend them?

(4) How to continue to control the Proletariat, of whom the Communists had always claimed to be the Advance Guard? How to avoid the disintegration of these important forces in favor of a regrouping in which there might be an infiltration of the elements most feared by the Stalinists, namely the Trotskyists?

37. The HO chi Minh Government saw clearly these difficulties. Its equilibrium might be lost as a result of the general disintegration of the different strata of society into two opposing categories: lukewarm elements who might become reactionaries against the Government; and extremists who might attempt to overthrow everything in order to escape from the suffocating impasse, without concerning themselves about the future and without fearing the precipitation of complete anarchy. In order to avoid this disintegration, and to ward off this eventual danger, the Government could only put up a screen: namely, propaganda that the country was still in danger.

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38. It was at this critical moment that the great solution came: the Franco-Vietnamese conflict. Instantly the military question overshadowed all others. With its own organizations firmly tied together, the Viet Minh found a palpable and concrete enemy against whom all possible forces must be concentrated. In the face of the necessity for filling all the pressing needs of war, terrorism was justified and the Viet Minh did not hesitate to abuse it in the name of the sacred motherland. Inconsistencies vanished--to reappear later.
39. The present conflict was awaited calmly by the HO chi Minh Government. In addition to the important reason that this conflict provided at least a temporary solution to the dangerously unstable situation which had existed since September, the Government had several other reasons to accept this conflict without fear:
- Internal factors: (1) The administrative machinery was unified--it had not been in March 1946. (2) The Army--both regular and irregular--were better organized than formerly. Guerrilla tactics were better understood and perfected. (3) They were able to threaten the French by proposing to adopt Scorched Earth tactics. (4) The most important political factor was a clearly defined aim for fighting: people knew why they were forced to fight. Propaganda was therefore easy; and it was conducted with skill.
- External factors: (1) Except for superiority in arms and munitions, the French were extremely weak from every point of view. (2) Neighboring countries--Siam, Burma, India--were sympathetic.
40. All these factors contributed greatly to the stability of the Government in the present conflict. It was almost a re-birth of the former favorable factors which contributed to the General Uprising of the Viet Minh immediately after the Japanese surrender. But it must be noted that the present conflict contains dangerous germs for the future of Vietnam. As a result of war--bombardments, devastating battles, and Scorched Earth Policy--production will for a long time be totally insufficient to satisfy wants. The people will suffer from misery, poverty and scarcity of goods. At the termination of this conflict, the situation from this point of view will be far worse than in September 1945.

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Note: As an aid in understanding Annamese terminology used in the above report, the following list of Annamese terms, Chinese characters, Pinyin and Wade-Giles romanization of the Chinese characters is presented.

1. Viet Nam Giai Phong Quan
Yueh Nan Chieh Fang Chun 越南解放軍
2. Dan Chu Dan
Min Chu Tang 民主黨
3. Viet Nam Thanh Hien Dang
Yueh Nan Ch'ing Hien Tang 越南青年黨
4. Viet Nam Thanh Hien Cach Deng Dong Chi Hoi
Yueh Nan Ch'ing Hien Ke Ming T'ung Chih Hui 越南青年革命同志會
5. Doan The Cuu Quoc
T'uan T'ai Chiu Kuo 團體救國
6. Tu Ve Cuu Quoc
Tzu Wei Chiu Kuo 自衛救國
7. Viet Minh
Yueh Meng 越盟

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8. Tieu To
Hsiao Tsu 小組
9. Khu Bo
Ch'u Pu 區部
10. Tinh Bo
Sheng Pu 省部
11. Tong Bo
Tsung Pu 總部
12. Thanh Bo
Ch'eng Pu 城部
13. Xu Bo
Ch'u Pu 處部
14. Can Bo Ky Thuat Chuyen Mon
Kan Pu Chi Shu Chuan Men 幹部技術專門
15. Uy Ban Viet Minh
Wei Pan Yueh Meng 委辦越盟
16. Cong An
Kung An 公安
17. Trinh Sat
Cheng Ch'a 偵察
18. Trinh Sat Chih Tri
Cheng Ch'a Cheng Chih 偵察政治
19. Trinh Sat Kinh Te
Cheng Ch'a Ching Chi 偵察經濟
20. Pao An
Pao An 保安
21. Canh Sat
Ching Ch'a 警察
22. Can Bo Guu Quoc
Kan Pu Chiu Kuo 幹部救國

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